

Websites for Groups Policy and Guidelines



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Websites are a key communication tool to reach out to both those starting to find out about Woodcraft Folk activities, and those already involved. For both young people and adults, they are a great way to share information about what groups, districts or projects are up to, as well as engaging with those people between face-to-face meetings. Many districts use a website to provide copies of forms and newsletters, as well as basic contact details and information about their groups and activities.

It is Woodcraft Policy that groups, districts, nations and projects on their websites should:

- Never publish details of exact meeting venues on-line, as stated in our safeguarding policy. Interested parents should contact a nominated contact or Folk House directly;
- Never publish contact details of young people. Contact details of adults should only be published with consent – people may prefer to create a specific 'public' email address for online contact, to protect personal details and reduce spam going to private addresses.
- Publish only material for which they have copyright, or the permission of the copyright owner;
- In line with the Woodcraft Folk's Safeguarding policy and government advice, seek parental consent for the publication of any photos or video taken of young people. One way to do this is to include a photographic / video consent section on the health or registration form being used. Material may not be published online, or offline (eg leaflets) without having first received consent.
- Information to be available only to certain people should be either placed in a password-protected area of the website, or by using an e-group hosting service like Google groups or Yahoo groups, which allows the management of membership and access more easily. Even in a 'secure' area like this, personal information about young people should never be stored – this should always be kept securely offline.
- For resources hosted on other websites, a link should be provided to that website, so people can retrieve the material from the source, as opposed to hosting it yourself. The same applies to educational resources hosted on the central Woodcraft Folk website.
- The phrase "Woodcraft Folk is a registered charity in England and Wales (1073665) and in Scotland (SC039791). " must be displayed at the foot of each page of the website.

Guidelines

1. What should it contain?

As with all publicity material, first impressions count. Ensure your site looks good and is easy to navigate. Online content can be accessed by anyone, so your website reflects on the organisation as a whole as well as your district/project.

- Aim for a clean, simple design, making use of photographs, and quotations from young people to make it youthful.
- Involve young people in designing the site and producing content for it – there are often young people with a lot of technology skills, and producing material for the website would make a good group night session.
- Ensure that the content doesn't date too quickly when it doesn't get updated for a while (which will happen!) – so be careful with your wording.
- Don't include a "last updated on x" statement unless you can be certain that it will kept up to date consistently.
- Use a guestbook if you want visitors to leave a message, but ensure it is moderated so that spam can be stopped easily.
- Provide a link to the central Woodcraft Folk website, www.woodcraft.org.uk - so visitors can easily find other Woodcraft Folk information. Request a link from the Woodcraft Folk website to yours, so that likewise people can find you.
- Projects producing educational material should consider making them available online – a free and easy way to distribute things to those within and outside the organisation.

2. What should be avoided?

Anything you put on the Internet is public – so only put things online that you'd be happy to see in a newspaper. This basic guideline should underline any decision to post something to your website.

3. Accessibility

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 states:

"From 1st October 1999 a service provider has to take reasonable steps to change a practice which makes it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of its services."

At a minimum, you should ensure that your website is navigable and easy to follow in a text-only mode, and so is suitable for screen reading software used by blind and partially sighted people. This has a variety of implications – for example, ensuring that all images on the site have 'Alt' text set, and that the site does not rely on frames.

In addition, it is basic good practice to ensure that your website is usable by those on different browsers, with a variety of operating systems. The World Wide Web Consortium provides tools for checking your website is compliant with the standards which each browser is meant to work with. See <http://validator.w3c.org>

A summary of the DDA requirements is provided at <http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/web-accessibility/uk-website-legal-requirements.shtml>

A checklist of basic requirements is provided by the W3C at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html>

4. What do you need?

a. Web hosting

You will need a web hosting account to hold the website. Most internet providers offer free hosting to their broadband customers, but this means that you are dependent on that person remaining involved and being happy to host the website. There are also many hosting providers who will host charity websites for free (sometimes with a requirement that you display adverts), and many more for which you need to pay an annual rental cost.

These can range from basic provision of an 'FTP Account' which lets you upload files, to online website management software that lets you easily create pages without needing to learn the complexities of HTML and other web languages.

b. Domain Name

You may want to purchase a domain name for your site, so that it is easily recognisable and can be put on publicity material, eg www.cambridge-woodcraft.org.uk. A domain name is a good idea – but please ensure that it is appropriate to your district/project – ensure that it mentions your district/project name, as well as woodcraft. Woodcraft Folk websites should ideally be in the .org.uk category, although opinions do vary.

c. Software

If your hosting is just a basic account, you will need to create the website using software offline before uploading it. There is lots of free software available to do this, with plenty of reviews online. There is also professional software such as Dreamweaver, which is available as a free trial.

Policy History

October 2008: Revised policy approved by General Council

1996: Policy approved by General Council